

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1, 4, 5, 7-9 and 11-23 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 14-17 and 23 are amended, and claim 6 is canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Support for the claims can be found throughout the specification, including the original claims and the drawings.

The Examiner is thanked for the courtesies extended to Applicant's representative during the telephone interview conducted on September 4, 2007. The substance of the interview, including any agreements reached, is reflected in the above amendments and the following remarks. Withdrawal of the rejections is thus respectfully requested.

I. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §112, Second Paragraph

The Office Action rejects claims 14-18 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as allegedly indefinite. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

As discussed during the interview, it is the heating body 71 of the heater 70 that is inserted into a cavity 20b in the tub 20, while the external terminal 72 remains is positioned at an outer side of the tub 20. The claimed protecting member as recited in claim 14 prevents water from accessing the external terminal 72, and not the heating body 71. In the interest of advancing prosecution of the application, Applicants have amended claims 14-17 as discussed during the interview, for clarification purposes only. It is respectfully submitted that claims 14-18 meet the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, and thus the rejection should be withdrawn.

II. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §102(e)

The Office Action rejects claims 1 and 4-13, 19 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over Rode et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,341,507 (hereinafter “Rode”). Claim 10 was cancelled in the Amendment filed on March 29, 2007, and claim 6 is cancelled by this Amendment. The rejection, in so far as it applies to the remaining claims, is respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 1 is directed to a washing machine. The washing machine includes a protecting member extending outward from an outer surface of the tub, wherein the protecting member diverts water flowing along the outer surface of the tub, and diverts water flowing along the inner surface of the housing, away from at least one corresponding electrical component which is operably coupled to the tub. Independent claim 23 recites similar features in varying scope. Rode neither discloses nor suggests the features of independent claims 1 and 23, or the respective claimed combinations of features.

Rode discloses a washing machine including a drum 6 positioned within a water container (tub) 2 provided in a housing 1. A bearing hub 12 housing roller bearings 13a and 13b is provided at a center of a four armed support cross 11 to couple a drive motor 10 and shaft 14 to the drum 6. The motor 10 includes a rotor 15, a stator 16, and a laminated stator core 17, windings 18, a magnetic yoke 22 and magnets 23. Individual laminates 17a of the core 17 are threaded into bores 26 formed in the support cross 11 and supported by support surfaces 20. Reinforcement ribs 21 extend from the central hub of the support cross 11 to the support surfaces 20.

As discussed during the interview, the ribs 21 simply reinforce the coupling of the tub 2 and the motor 10/shaft 14/bearings 13a, 13b, and provide for proper placement and mounting of these components. Rode neither discloses nor suggests that any portion of the support cross 11 diverts water flowing along the inner surface of the housing 1 away from any component of the motor 10.

Further, an aluminum component 15a and a cylindrical section 15b of the rotor 15 shown in Figure 2 of Rode reaches from the shaft 14 to the magnetic yoke 22 and magnets 23. Thus, any water flowing along the inner surface of the housing 1 could easily access any of these components of the motor 10, with no interference from either the support cross 11 or the ribs 21. Rather, as discussed during the interview, if water/condensation were flowing along the inner surface of the housing 1, water would flow from the outer extremity of the support cross 11 (shown at the top of Figure 2 of Rode) downward and along the inclined surface of the support cross 11. This water would collect in the space between the support surface 20 and the outer edge of the aluminum component 15a of the rotor 15, thus contacting and damaging the stator 16, stator core 17, winding 18, magnetic yoke 22 and magnets 23.

For all of these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that independent claims 1 and 23 are not anticipated by Rode, and thus the rejection of independent claims 1 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over Rode should be withdrawn. Dependent claims 4, 5, 7-9, 11-13 and 19 are allowable at least for the reasons set forth above with respect to independent claim 1, from which they depend, as well as for their added features.

III. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

The Office Action rejects claims 14-18 and 20-22 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Rode, and further in view of Broker et al., U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0051296 A1 (hereinafter “Broker”). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Dependent claims 14-18 and 20-22 are allowable over Rode at least for the reasons set forth above with respect to independent claim 1, from which they depend, as well as for their added features. Further, Broker is merely cited as allegedly teaching a heater, and thus fails to overcome the deficiencies of Rode. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claims 14-18 and 20-22 are allowable over the applied combination, and thus the rejection of claims 14-18 and 20-22 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Rode and Broker should be withdrawn.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that any additional changes would place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the Joanna K. Mason, at the telephone number listed below.

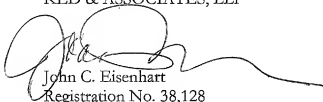
Serial No. **10/717,935**

Docket No. **K-0553**

Reply to Office Action of June 14, 2007

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this, concurrent and future replies, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 16-0607 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,
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Date: September 13, 2007

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